THE BLAST

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FOUND—AND LOST

TO THE WORKERS

Frank A. Fearnley

Your kings and your countries need you,
You, the sons of honest toil;
But your countries have been stolen,
You're needed to guard the spoil.

Flower of the nations' manhood,
They need you but a day;
Mayhap, the morning's sun will rise,
On heaps of bleeding clay.

I see the bloody plains of war
Swept clear with shot and shell;
Death's scythe is sweeping quick and fast,
Gape wide the jaws of hell.

I hear the cannon's roar,
The cry of souls in anguish;
And maimed and mangled, friend and foe,
Are left to die and languish.

O men, where does the honor lie,
In deeds of foulest murder;
To rob a mother of her son,
Or children of their father.

You build the ships, the ships of war,
To dominate the foam;
To guard the land you don't possess,
And your hovel, called a home.

You build the lofty palace hall,
You build the prison cell;
You forge the fetters of the chain,
To bind yourselves in hell.

You toil and sweat, you spin and weave,
You plow the fertile lands,
Yet in the fruitful summer time,
You stand with empty hands.

Remember this, the great are great,
Whilst you, on knee, are bended;
But stand and act and think like men,
The tyrants' day is ended.

WHY REVOLUTIONARY?

MANY a gentle soul shrinks from the word revolution. They see in it naught but shedding of blood, and erroneously imagine the revolutionist a monster. Logically they might as well revile the surgeon whose operation, bloody though it be, relieves human suffering, or the gardener with his pruning hook who lops off superfluous branches that the tree may grow.

It is their very love of humanity or their hatred of tyranny which makes revolutionists in every land sacrifice social standing, liberty, life itself for the cause of human freedom.

Revolutionists are the milestones on the road of progress.

The nice, good, law-abiding muttonhead rapturously listens to the screech of the eagle on Fourth of July and cracks his elbow waving a piece of bunting on a stick, shouting "Hurrah, hurrah, for the flag that makes us free!" Next morning, likely as not, his freedom has a kink in it, and he dog-trots around from one shop to another begging the masters of the bread, "Please, mister, give me a job!"

As for the flag making him free, he might as well have a rabbit's foot in his pocket or a ring in his nose, for all the good it does him.

The same with other nations. The Britisher swells with pride over the Magna Charta and over Cromwell's revolution; the French celebrate the fall of the Bastile; the Italians jubilate over Garibaldi the Liberator and his red-shirted revolutionists.

Revolutions are celebrated in every land by the most respectable conservatives as a matter of mere stupid tradition. Their historical interpretation is left to the social outlaw, the revolutionist of today.

George Washington would have been hanged as a traitor had the British gotten hold of him. John Brown was hanged as traitor; still, his soul goes marching on. Not one American in a thousand knows the names of his judges. Cromwell and Garibaldi would have met John Brown's fate had they failed.

But what of those that have not succeeded?

There are none:

"They never die who fall
In a great cause. The block may soak their gore,
Their heads may rotten in the sun; their limbs
Be strung to city gates and castle walls.
But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years
Elapse and others share as dark a doom,
They but augment the deep and sweeping thought
Which overpowers all others and turns the world
At last to freedom."

In all history the ruling classes never surrendered an iota of their power except through force or fear. Nor did the masters ever cease encroaching upon the liberties of the people until the people revolted in self-defense. In self-defense the power over work or idleness (which means practically the power over life and death), now possessed by the employing class, must be broken by Labor. This requires preparation through revolutionary education and organization.

The clash on the barricades may be a long way off. It may never come if Labor musters enough solidarity to accomplish the General Strike, the revolution of the coming days. Again, if Labor does not in time awaken to the dangers of militarism, the gatling guns may win temporary victory for the master class. But even a revolution unaccomplished is not a failure. As well talk of the failure of the human hand because on first attempts it fails to accom-

plish tasks requiring skill and practice. The revolutionary ideas which prompt resistance cannot be stayed by machine guns.

The men and women, forgotten and unsung though they be, who have helped spread revolutionary ideas, are the true makers of history, in comparison to whom the leaders made conspicuous by time and circumstance are mere figureheads.

In this there is work for all. Are you doing your share? You can, by aiding THE BLAST.

The basest of all slaves is he who glories in the clanking of his chains. Don't be one of them.

We met a proud patriot the other day and stuck a BLAST before his bewildered eyes. As he did not resist, we took a dollar from him for a subscription. But when we asked him to give a few copies to the boys in the shop, he refused to do it for fear of losing his job. Still he thought this was a free country and he was horrified at the word revolution, till we told him that since the revolution in Mexico the bosses down there have had to give three months' notice before they could fire a low-down peon.

Then he liked it.

There are millions of the same kind running wild.

Go after them.

THE BLASTERS.

LIFE IS VISION

My Dear Berkman:—

Thank you for the January 22d issue of *Organized Labor,* with the editorial "Labor is Life—Not Vision." I am not sure I understand it. The writer gives a high place to the visionaries (dreamers), and yet the general tenor seems to be the uselessness of vision for any practical purpose or to change the inevitable curse of Labor.

Of course, if Labor's present curse be inevitable, nothing will change it; but I believe nothing is inevitable in life but death, and death is the gateway through which a new life continually comes, pushing away the old as an obstruction. As individuals we rebel against death, but if we only knew it, death is the most vital force there is.

I infer the writer contrasts Labor as a hard, stern, eternal fact with Vision—as dreams, soothing but deceiving, because he says in effect "Artists, dreamers, poets, philosophers are often inclined to complain that Labor has no vision. They burn and yearn for a change of conditions which will bring with it relief and more general happiness. Yet in their hopes and aspirations they overlook the fact that Labor is Life and not Vision. It is stern reality. Momentary exultation results from Vision, etc."

Now, as I view it, Labor is no more Life than Leisure. The Labor class has no more Life than the Capitalistic class, or the Idle Rich, or the Idle Poor. All humanity is Life. Life is Vision. Without Vision life is mere existence. Perhaps the clam dreams of a perfect beach and a perfect tide, and none to molest or destroy; or even pictures the day when he will clasp the fingers of the exploiter in a clammy grasp and drag him down to destruction. But so far as we know, the clam has no vision—it merely exists.

Shall Labor be the same? The slaves of Rome dreamed of Leisure and Freedom, and rebelled and lost. Still they did dream, they did rebel, and were happier in their rebellion. The peasants of Germany dreamed of Freedom and Leisure, and rebelled in the Peasants' War, and lost. Still they did dream, they did rebel. The Peasantry of England dreamed of Freedom and a democracy, and rebelled, and won,—and the march toward man's economic and political freedom began. The peasantry of France dreamed of a little more the life of a man and a little less the life of a hog, and rebelled, and won—and another small step toward human freedom was taken. The miner and the factory weaver of England had a vision of collective strength, asking a little more the life of a man and a little less the life of a brute, and won,—the step called Labor Unions. Watts saw the lid of a tea kettle lifting and had the vision of the giant Steam. Stephenson dreamed the railway locomotive. Franklin dreamed electricity and Morse the telegraph, and the world was changed.

Man's whole world rests upon vision. Not only Shakspeare and Milton glancing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, and, as imagination bodied forth the forms of things unknown, turning them to shapes and giving to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.

Not only Homer, Goethe, Beethoven, Moliere, Villon, Dante, Cervantes, but Archimedes, Von Humboldt, Karl Marx, Danton, Pasteur, Proudhon, Tolstoy, Kropotkin, Galileo, Bruno, Ferrer, Darwin, Arkwright, Tom Paine, Jefferson, Lincoln, Bell, Edison, Mergenthaler. Everything which marks man apart from the unprogressive clam is Vision. And shall Labor, which is Life and which is the builder of all, be denied Vision?

Vision is no empty dream, no floating cobweb. It is man's vital force. The only vital force save the mere existence of the idiot. It is very definite in its terms—sometimes it murders, sometimes it dynamites.

Labor's ceaseless and endless struggle for a little more leisure, a little more freedom—a little more the life of a man and a little less the life of a brute—is but the dynamic life-force shaking off the clogs and endeavoring to realize its vision of a day when work shall be for uses and not exploitation. When the laborer, though he earn his bread by the sweat of his face, shall also sit with his children in the shade of his vine and fig tree and have leisure to enjoy his own soul and be free.

The Persians say leisure is one of the gateways to heaven. I know freedom is the very instinct of the soul. And, above all, shall not the laborer have a vision of that day when he shall not be classed apart as the "laboring class," but he and his shall in all things be respected according to his own deserts; himself serene in a natural self respect, not the false boasting of one who feels he boasts a lie. Has Labor no vision of a city without slums? A factory without hovels? A mine without slaves?

Unless Labor has these visions, they will never materialize—and Labor will never be free. But they will come, for Labor truly is Life and Life is Vision.

If the Labor leaders have not vision, or having it do not dare, others will be thrown up from that seething mass below whose ferment is Vision.

Vision is Life. It is all there is save mere sodden, contented, fixed, brutish existence. And the greatest Vision for Labor today is Solidarity. That is practical enough. That goes down to the very root of Labor's Life—and that is Vision. Let me repeat: If Labor be Life, as indeed it is, then Labor is Vision, for the Essence of Life is Vision.

CHARLES ERSKINE WOOD SCOTT.

THE POWER OF THE PRESS

Caroline Nelson

IN ancient times the Church ruled the world with an iron rod. Before mankind could make the slightest progress, that power had to be curbed. The Church and its hierarchy are now driven into the field of defense. Its power to form and shape the opinion of the public, particularly of that portion which belongs to the working class, is weak. No intelligent men really fear the Church today.

But they do fear the press. The press has absorbed the arrogant power that the Church used to have, and it uses it just as ruthlessly. The press has the power to silence any voice and to bury any cause in the grave of oblivion, and it does not hesitate to use it. It is the most powerful ally of the ruling power. Like the Church of old, it pretends that it has an undying affection for the poor. It begs for them for Christmas, and prepares festivities and presents for the outcasts and poverty-stricken. In a certain large city on the coast several papers that were particularly active in helping the poor this year, dug into the pockets of the newsboys, and charged them twenty-five cents more for a hundred papers than they had paid previously. The news sellers had to foot the bill of the Christmas glories graciously handed out by those papers. They not only have to foot it for Christmas, but all the year round; thus paying for it over and over again. But the news sellers are helpless; they have no voice. Therefore why not charge the bill up to their account in a nice legitimate way? That is the same old game that the Church used to play, perhaps a little less brazenly.

This power of the press must be curbed before the working class can make any headway in modern times. Men and women with brains and the courage of their convictions must rise up and smite that power. They must unmask its dark and evil methods of creating public opinion, and its diabolical way of serving the powers that be and the public at the same time.

That is why the workers must create a press for themselves. A press that should be a great deal more than merely a feeble voice of the workers' own feeble desires. It must be a press that can destroy the Old and lead the way to the New. It should possess some of the dare-devil spirit of a Voltaire and the deep insight and fearlessness of a Thomas Paine. It should steer clear of economic dogmatism and sociological infallibilities which have been so fatal to it in the past. It should not make a mountain out of a mole-hill, or feed its readers on small talk and sensationalism about victories that are doubtful; for that is only playing the game of the capitalist press, which can't be beaten by a little sheet in the labor world. The workers are constantly crying, "Show us the way out!"

Nor is it enough to point out that all slavery is based on industrial bondage; for on the foundation of industrial serfdom has been reared a whole social structure that shields and guards this foundation to such an extent that it is almost impossible to touch it. There is, for instance, THE SCHOOL that moulds the child's mind to fit the System, and shapes the young into narrow little patriots, eager to protect the Existing with their own lives, if need be. This must obviously be changed if the workers are to make any real progress on the road to industrial freedom.

The toilers must have something more to fight with than their pennies and high-sounding phraseology. They must have an ever-increasing intelligence and an ever-decreasing competition among themselves, built on greater solidarity and smaller families.

With these remarks I hope that THE BLAST will go out into the world full of courage, to make friends—not out of charity, but because of genuine admiration.

JUSTICE DEFINED

IT is dangerous to tell the people that laws are not just; for they obey only for the reason that they think them just. Hence they must be told at the same time that they must obey them because they are laws, as they must obey superiors, not because they are just, but because they are superiors. All sedition is prevented, then, if we can make this understood and it is, properly speaking, the definition of justice.—PASCAL.

THE POOR MAN'S TAXI

NO better illustration of the impotence of politics, as an instrument for social betterment, can be had than the treatment accorded the jitneys. With the advent of the poor man's taxi, the practice, not tolerated in any European country, of slamming passengers into a street car like mud into a scow, was on the point of being abolished. The emancipation of the straphangers seemed near.

But as Mr. Yerkes, of Chicago, now happily dead, once remarked: "The dividends are in the straps."

In order to provide dividends for millionaire street car magnates rather than comfort for the public, the lowly jitney bus has practically been legislated out of existence in every city where it had a foothold, under the pretense of "protecting the public."

The dear public never had a look in.

The sacred and supposedly omnipotent ballot gets a bad attack of paralysis every time it runs up against submarine dollar diplomacy.

NONE are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.—GOETHE.

THE human race is in the best condition when it has the greatest degree of liberty.—DANTE.

THE BLAST

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COMMENTS

Promises and Performance

THE British Conscription Bill is expected to become a law this month. The government promised the workers that the law will not be used against Labor.

Verily, it is to laugh. Unfortunately, there are still too many who have faith in governmental promises.

It reminds us that when the State Constabulary was created in Pennsylvania, the government solemnly assured the workers that the new police would do only patrol duty in the outlying districts. But no sooner was the Constabulary organized than it was let loose upon striking workingmen. The fiendish brutality of this State police has been so terrible that its members are now universally known among the workers of Pennsylvania as the Cossacks.

Beware of your masters' promises.

It seems, however, that not all the workers of Great Britain can be so easily fooled. In the recent Labor Congress a very strong minority of the Labor delegates voted against the infamous bill. May the workers of America take notice.

* * *

At Home

THE American jingoes now demand universal conscription in this country. That means forcible service. But surely the people of the United States have sense enough to defend themselves when in danger. Why, then, must they be forced to it?

The militarists are letting the cat out of the bag. Their arguments prove that the workers really have no reason to defend the country of their masters. That's why they want to force them to it.

* * *

Defending Your Robbers

LET'S talk it over, Henry Dubbs. There is vast wealth in this country of yours: plenty of gold and silver, precious stones, gigantic warehouses where good things are stored, palaces and fine buildings worth millions of dollars, billions of bank deposits and many other fine things.

All that wealth needs defending. But let us ask you, Mr. Worker, what share of all this wealth do you own? Or your wife and your children? Or your fellow-worker on the bench next to you?

You don't own any of it, you say? Well, now, that's strange. Didn't you and the others like you build and create all those things? Still you insist that you don't own anything of it?

Then why th' hell do they want *you* to protect it?

Tell us, please.

Labor Goes A-Begging

THE Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, the Order of Railway Conductors and Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen are considering a demand for an 8-hour day. It is very questionable whether the Kings of the iron steed will grant the request, which means a strike of 400,000 men.

It is as if an audience of 5000 people were to beg permission of the Chairman of the meeting to please let them leave the hall when they got tired holding down their seats. Suppose the Chairman refused? Well, wouldn't they get up and just walk out?

Those 400,000 men are the actual power that keeps the railroads going. Without them not a car could be moved or an engine fired. The whole railroad industry is in their hands, absolutely. And they—they ask permission of the Chairman to please let them leave the hall.

Stupid, isn't it? Suppose these 400,000 men just decided to *leave* after 8 hours' work, or after 6, or 4 hours? What could the Masters do about it? Why, just nothing. The railroads must be run; the Rockefellers, Harrimans and other kid-gloved ones can't run them themselves. They would simply submit.

Ah, but that means Solidarity and spunk. The Labor leaders would be the first to object to such an un-slavish proceeding.

* * *

Investigation Dope

NO less than four separate Commissions are now "investigating" the Youngstown strike. If you watch them carefully some of them may actually report that "conditions in the mills could be improved."

It's an easy game for the bosses. If their slaves are dissatisfied and show signs of rebellion, all that's necessary is to appoint a commission, or several, to "investigate." That ends the trouble, the "hands" go back to work, and the satisfied coupon clipper says with a sigh of relief, "Thank goodness, it's settled now."

That is just the tragedy. It's too easily "settled," always to the satisfaction and profit of the boss.

* * *

Resistance to Political and Industrial Tyranny

WE are glad the Department of Labor finally decided to permit Emmeline Pankhurst, the English suffragette, to enter this country. It is stupid, of course, to have such questions come up at all. Why shouldn't any one enter this country? Are the great people of the United States afraid to hear any one's views?

But the admission of Mrs. Pankhurst has special significance. The Department decided to let her in on the ground that her offenses were political. In other words, her many acts of violence—for which she was repeatedly convicted and imprisoned—do not constitute, in the stilted language of officialdom, "moral turpitude." In plain English it means that violence committed by political offenders is not to be considered criminal.

Very likely the action of the Labor Department was merely a sop thrown to American suffragists. This is election year, you know, and the administration needs

support, especially of those women who have the vote in this country. It may also be, of course, that the liberal decision of the Department is partly due to the progressive ideas of Commissioner Louis F. Post, the Single Taxer.

However, whatever the real cause of the decision, the logic on which it was officially based is good: acts of violence committed by political offenders cannot be considered proof of moral turpitude or as being criminal. With equal logic we go further. We hold that violence committed by soldiers of the industrial war—not only in England but right here in our own country—is equally justifiable with acts of violence by political offenders. Both are fighting against tyranny, and—if anything—industrial tyranny over men in America is greater than the political tyranny of Great Britain over its women. Therefore resistance more necessary.

* * *

Electing the Boss's Wife

SPEAKING of suffragettes, English or American, it is understood of course that we do not oppose woman suffrage. The vote will do working *women* no more good than it does working *men*. Woman, like man, is entitled to no less than she can take.

But what we mean to point out is this: Some people imagine that the suffragists and suffragettes are inspired by a new passion for liberty. That's a mistake. What inspires them is the *passion to govern*.

It is not woman, as a sex, that is the victim of existing conditions. It is only the *working* woman—exactly as is the working man.

Will the working woman gain anything by electing her boss's wife to office?

* * *

Defiance of Authority

THE Margaret Sanger mass meeting proved a great success. The Chief of Police of San Francisco warned the meeting not to circulate any family limitation literature. But the spirit of the gathering was such that not only were the forbidden pamphlets circulated in the audience, but one of the speakers handed them out direct from the platform.

Oi, what a defiance of holy authority!

But it is this kind of defiance, open and unafraid, that defeats prohibition and oppression. It was the courageous stand of Margaret Sanger in defying the law against advocating family limitation that roused thousands of people to the need of such work—people who are now also ready to defy the law.

We need more of this kind of resistance in our submissive, timid American life. Especially do the workers need it.

* * *

A Good Example

JUDGES are known to be good stickers. They never quit their fat jobs voluntarily. Only death can take them off the bench.

But the exceptional does happen occasionally, and it certainly deserves a comment. John H. Stevenson, Municipal Judge of Portland, Oregon, actually quit his position of his own free will. It was a fine thing to do. Still finer are the reasons given by him for his action: "If I could help the people who come before me, I might remain. But I cannot help them, and I am constantly called upon to penalize them. I have been doing this daily now for more than two years and I cannot longer continue."

No stronger indictment could be brought against our criminal society that dooms thousands to misery and hopeless punishment in order to enable the few to roll in luxury. Think of the thousands who daily face the Judges in our police courts—year in and year out—just to be penalized without being helped.

If those judges had the least spark of manhood or decency they would follow the example of the Portland Justice.

* * *

Moulding Slaves

AMERICAN professors, like Scott Nearing and others, have for years been promptly kicked out from the high seats of "learning," when they dared express opinions contrary to the masters' teachings. Now it is the turn of the pupils. Harold B. Matson, a senior in the San Francisco High School, has been peremptorily dismissed (half a term before graduation) for expressing himself against military training in the school. Matson had issued a pamphlet announcing the advent of the *Scholastic Rebel*, a school paper opposed to militarism.

Fie on the carping critics who charge our educational institutions with being incubators of obedient slaves. Our schools are designed to develop manhood, independence of thought and self-reliance in the pupils. The Matson case proves it, does it not? And it is only one out of many.

THE SCHMIDT CASE—AND BEFORE

Ed Gammons

WHEN the McNamara boys were sentenced in Los Angeles four years ago by Judge Bordwell, for complicity in the *Times* explosion, the era of industrial peace came into existence. To quell the intensive feeling of labor unionism against the vile subterranean tactics of the Merchants' & Manufacturers' Association, well-meaning sociologists established a truce with the main condition that no more prosecutions would be instituted in connection with the McNamara case. This institution of the industrial Golden Rule in Los Angeles was heralded near and far. We were told that the capitalist class was experiencing a radical change of heart, that the philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth was entering into their business conduct, and that in view of this astounding development the industrial struggle would inevitably lose its aggressive demeanor in favor of a conciliatory spirit.

Years went by. The organization of the Los Angeles workers proceeded slowly, but William J. Burns was relentlessly hunting for Caplan and Schmidt, with ten thousand dollars of blood-money constantly in view. Finally the "great American sleuth" located his victims, in September, 1914. Were they hurried to Los Angeles? No. On

the witness stand, a couple of weeks ago, Burns explained that he wanted to bag both his victims at one shot, and that though he located Schmidt in September, 1914, he was not quite sure about the whereabouts of Caplan. A very important fact in connection with this delay was that John D. Fredericks, District Attorney, who prosecuted the McNamaras and who was a party to the "Golden Rule" truce, did not vacate office till the 1st of January, 1915. He was succeeded by Thomas Lee Woolwine, who was elected solely by the labor vote. In his pre-election campaign this legal star was marvelously profuse in declaring that the Steel Trust, or any other corporation, would not be allowed to prostitute the office which he aspired to, in any campaign against labor. To the editor of the local newspaper he solemnly declared that he would never indict a single soul in connection with the *Times* case, and that no power on earth could compel him to reopen it. He wished he could "take his heart out of his breast and give it as a hostage for his honest intentions."

By the middle of February the Labor-loving, altruistic Woolwine was complaisant, and Burns paraded his victims into Los Angeles. The Golden Rule was an abortion only—it never lived. The mask was off, and we heard Los Angeles ring with the demand for the blood of Caplan and Schmidt. They had millions to convict. They dragged in Noel, of Indianapolis, as a sure convictor; Clarke, the Cincinnati felon and perjurer; Davis, debonair would-be murderer and felon; McManigal, the arch-traitor; and, lastly, Donald Vose Meserve, the most contemptible of them all, who betrayed his friends for a few dollars, whose most daring deed was that of dipping into his room-mate's pocket in Seattle, and who is now a lonely outcast without shame or friends. This was the hell-crew which for three months yelped at Mathew A. Schmidt, a man whom only one of them had ever seen—and that in New York—and who towered above them all in every manly virtue and honest trait.

Thus Mathew A. Schmidt joins the McNamaras, Ford, Suhr, Quinlan, Lawson and our other comrades who are held by the enemy. Once a revolutionary is enmeshed in the law—the "rule-ridden game," as Melville Davisson Post calls it—the chances are all against him; the dice are loaded.

As the struggle goes on and on, the need for action on the industrial field is apparent. The courts are courts of *law*—not of *justice*. The workers must realize the power they have in their hands, the power which determines whether our railroads will run tomorrow, whether our factories will cloud the blue sky with the smoke of industry, whether the humming wires will carry the news of the East to the West, aye, whether our masters of industry shall eat their breakfasts. Education of the working class is our crying need. Tell them the story of Lawrence and Ludlow; tell them how sixty-five per cent. of the Belgian working class won their demands by a general strike; let them know what the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations reported after they reviewed the industrial battle ground. It is not a time for personalities and isms; the working class must be educated to the point of bitter resistance. And when the spirit of utter discontent stalks, North and South, East and West, the awakened workers will not be long in changing from the slough of despondency and misery to the bright new era of industrial freedom.

THE HUMAN MASS

Luke North

BLASTING is a good and surely a necessary task, but I submit that radicalism needs it more than does the mass. Radicalism's brain is in a rut. It is thinking, talking, writing, about as it did thirty years ago—it is still blasting and hammering at the unthinking mass. It should be welding the mass and leading it toward construction. It is still yelling, "Stupid, blind, slavish people, wake up and throw off your chains!" The mass is not aroused that way, not even to the Christian trenches and death machines. Nor is it led by teaching it economics. Those who expect to save the world by educating it in the mysteries, or even the essentials, of the various economic creeds, are still blinder than those who think to blast it out of God's and Mammon's strangle hold.

"God and my country!" led the masses to the European shambles. It is a stronger urge than all the common sense, rationalistic shibboleths of radicalism. Why? Because it holds high an Ideal—a false ideal as we know, but that is no matter. It is a very exalted ideal, entirely removed from any sort of immediate personal advantage. It is an exalted and untainted ideal (however damfoolish we know it to be). There is no cheap dross on it, no mud of the market or the bank. It stirs the deepest recesses of human nature.

At heart the human mass is neither mechanistic nor materialistic—it is spiritual, in the highest, deepest value of that much-abused word. At heart the mass is not a gluttonous, sensual brute to be lured by food. It was not so lured or led by the priesthoods. Radicalism, if it really cares to do anything, might well sit at the feet of Catholicism and learn how the mass is molded, led (to its own doom); it will be led to its own unfoldment in much the same manner, or it will wait the toilsome centuries' unfoldment from within.

It is radicalism's task to give the mass an unsullied ideal, free of personal interest. . . .

I trust The Blast will be turned not on the mass, but on its natural leaders, the Intelligent Minority—radicalism. The mass is as it is. It is not now amenable to logic or to dynamite—perhaps it will be some day, if radicalism learns how to lead it.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

Labor Bodies and other friendly organizations are hereby requested to co-operate with us on the

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNE FESTIVAL

in Commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of the Paris Commune of 1871, SATURDAY, MARCH 18th, 8 P. M., Averill Hall, 1254 Market Street, opposite City Hall.

Excellent music program and addresses.

THE COMMITTEE.

FOR YOUNG FOLKS

THE other day I dropped in to visit a friend. As I opened the door, I heard excited voices inside. I knew that Tommy was again getting a scolding. Tommy, you must know, is my friend's youngest son, a boy of about twelve years.

"Why can't I have it?" I heard Tommy ask.

"I told you, you can't," his father answered angrily.

"But I want to know why I can't," cried Tommy.

"You can't, that's all. Shut up now."

I didn't stay long there. I don't like to be where people are quarreling. But I wanted to know what they were quarreling about. So when I was ready to go I called to Tommy:

"Say, Tom, let's go down to the park, will you?"

"You betcher," said Tom.

Tom and I are old friends, so I made no bones about wanting to know why his father scolded him.

"Well, you see," he said, "my pants are all torn and I asked father to buy me a new pair. He said I couldn't have it. I asked him why and he told me to shut up."

I could see that Tom felt very hurt. At first I thought it was because he couldn't have new pants, but after awhile he said:

"It's always 'shut up!' It makes me sick. Father never tells me why. 'You can't, that's all'," Tommy tried to mimic his father's voice.

I saw that Tommy was a fine, proud lad. Why shouldn't he know, I asked myself. I was thinking hard over it as I walked with the boy, when he broke out again.

"I ain't no kid any more," he said angrily. "Father don't know that."

"You know what, Tom," I said, "if your father doesn't answer your questions, *I'll* try to answer them."

"Will you?" he cried joyfully.

But the next minute he said, "No, you can't."

"Why?" I asked, a little hurt. "Try me; perhaps I can."

"No, it ain't that," he answered. "There's many things I want to know, oh, ever so many questions I can ask. And if you ain't around, how am I going to remember them all?"

Here was a hard one. I was anxious to know what questions Tom would ask me, and I wanted to help him to an answer. But he was right. I am a busy man and I couldn't see him often. What could be done?

I looked at Tommy as we were walking along. His fine young face seemed troubled. I could see he was thinking hard. All of a sudden he stopped.

"Say, I got it," he cried. "I'll write it out."

"What do you mean, Tommy?"

"Well, every time I think of something to ask you, I'll write it down, and then when I see you, I'll ask you all the questions at once."

"It's a fine idea, Tom," I said. But as I was speaking, another thought struck me. Perhaps I would have never thought of it if it were not for Tom.

"It's a fine idea, Tom," I said again, "but what do you say to this: you write down your questions and bring them to me. You know I publish a paper. Well, I'll answer your questions in the paper."

"You'll put my name in, too?" he asked bashfully.

"Yes, if you want it."

"Do I? But—" he stopped as if ashamed.

"But what, Tom?"

"People will read it and think my questions foolish."

"Oh, no, don't worry about that, Tom. Questions are never foolish when you really want to know."

"Honest, now?"

"Honest."

And that's how Tom and I made the bargain. He said he'll bring me his questions, but he was afraid there will be too many. But when I told him that it will be all right, he said he would tell the other fellows to send in their questions, too. They all had questions, he said; the boys and the girls also. And I'll bet that you boys and girls, who read this, have some questions, too. Send them in to me. And next week I am going to answer Tom's first question, the one that his father wouldn't answer.

ALECK.

MEETINGS AND LECTURES

(Under this heading announcements will be made free of charge to Labor and Radical Organizations)

CURRENT EVENTS CLUB will meet every Friday, 8 P. M., sharp, at Averill Hall, 1256 Market Street near 9th. No lectures. Discussion of important events of the week.

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Saturday, February 12th, 8 p. m., Union of Russian Workers will produce Gogol's play "Marriage." American Film Hall, 425 Hoffman Avenue. Admission, 25c.

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ARTHUR SWAN will speak at the Solidarity Club, Sunday, February 6th, 8 p. m., on "The Revolution in Mexico." Woodmen's Hall, 3345 Seventeenth Street.